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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

U.S. TO DONATE CORN TO LATVIA

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced the United States will donate 100,000 metric tons of corn to Latvia.

The \$11.0 million donation will be sold by the Latvian government to private-sector feed millers and livestock and poultry producers for feed.

“The proceeds from these sales will help fund feeding projects and help develop Latvian agriculture,” Madigan said. “Part of the proceeds will go to private voluntary organizations operating in Latvia to provide food assistance to the needy. The remaining funds will go to developing private sector farms to help increase grain production.”

The supply period of the donation is fiscal 1992.

The donation was made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation to developing countries. The program is administered by USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, FAS, (202) 720-5263.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448

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USDA ANNOUNCES PRELIMINARY FLUE-CURED TOBACCO REFERENDUM RESULTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Preliminary results from a mail referendum held Jan. 6-9 indicate flue-cured tobacco growers voted to continue acreage-poundage marketing quotas and price supports for their crops for acreage-poundage the 1992, 1993 and 1994 marketing years.

John Stevenson, associate administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said results show that 16,079 of the 16,329 producers who voted in the referendum—or 98.47 percent—voted yes. A vote of at least two-thirds in favor was necessary to continue acreage-poundage marketing quotas.

In the last referendum, held January 1989, 97.9 percent of the voting growers favored marketing quotas on an acreage-poundage basis for the 1989, 1990 and 1991 crops.

Flue-cured tobacco is grown in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. These are the state-by-state results:

State	Votes Cast	Percentage Favoring Quotas
Alabama	12	100.00
Florida	190	92.11
Georgia	1,206	98.51
North Carolina	11,310	98.70
South Carolina	1,276	98.82
Virginia.....	2,335	97.64
Total	16,329	98.47

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

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MADIGAN ANNOUNCES REVISION OF COVERAGE TERMS FOR REMAINING GSM-102 CREDIT GUARANTEES TO THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation will begin to consider and process exporters’ applications for export credit guarantees in connection with sales of U.S. agricultural commodities to the former Soviet Union for sales made on a C&F or C.I.F. basis, i.e., when the sales price includes both freight and commodity components.

“This action is being taken to facilitate financing of new or unregistered sales to the former Soviet Union,” said Madigan.

These sales are under the \$93.8-million balance of the \$600-million credit guarantee allocation that was announced on Dec. 2, 1991, under the CCC Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102).

Madigan said that the amount guaranteed, including any freight component of the commodity price, will be charged to the remaining balance of the commodity lines of guarantee.

Madigan reminded exporters that the CCC would extend credit guarantee coverage for the C&F value of a transaction only when the exporter's sale of the commodity has been made on a C&F or C.I.F. basis.

Madigan said that of the \$93.8 million balance, commodity availabilities currently are as follows: \$45.75 million for feed grains; \$0.17 million for hops; \$0.9 million for vegetable oils; and \$46.97 million for wheat.

All other terms and conditions previously announced remain the same.

For further information, call (202) 720-3224. For 24-hour information on Export Credits activities, call (202) 690-1621.

Rebecca Broeking (202) 720-0328

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USDA ISSUES LIME RESEARCH AND PROMOTION ORDER

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued an order, or set of regulations, to establish a lime research and promotion program, a USDA official announced today.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the program was authorized by the Lime Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Act under the 1990 Farm Bill.

The program will be administered by a board of seven lime producers, three lime importers and a member representing the public, Haley said.

The board members will be appointed by the secretary of agriculture from nominees submitted by the lime industry, as in existing research and promotion programs for other agricultural commodities.

A mandatory assessment of up to one cent per pound on domestic or imported limes sold in the United States will fund the program. Producers or importers of less than 35,000 pounds of limes per year will be exempted from paying the assessment.

Haley said the order establishing the program is based on a proposal the lime industry submitted in response to USDA's request for proposals in the Jan. 30, 1991, Federal Register.

Details of the lime order will appear in the Jan. 27 Federal Register.

Copies and additional information are available from Jim Wendland, Research and Promotion Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, rm. 2533-S; tel. (202) 720-9915.

Rebecca Unkenholz (202) 720-8998

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MADIGAN NAMES MEMBERS TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced appointments to the initial National Organic Standards Board, a group recently established to help develop standards for production and processing of agricultural products to be marketed as “organic.”

The board is being formed in compliance with the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 under the 1990 Farm Bill.

The secretary selected the appointees from 112 candidates. The board is comprised of four farmers/growers, two handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist, three consumer/public interest advocates and three environmentalists. The members come from all four U.S. regions.

Appointed members are: scientist—Esper K. Chandler, Edinburg, Texas; handlers—Eugene B. Kahn, Rockport, Wash. and Richard C. Theuer, Chesterfield, Mo.; farmers—Leroy D. Eppley, Wabash, Ind.; Gary D. Osweiler, Boone, Iowa; Robert M. Quinn, Big Sandy, Mont.; and Nancy A. Taylor, Potlatch, Idaho;

Environmentalists—William J. Friedman, IV, Albuquerque, N.M.; Thomas A. Stoneback, Allentown, Pa.; and Craig V. Weakly, Yuba City, Calif.; consumer advocates—Merrill A. Clark, Cassopolis, Mich., Donald M. Kinsman, Storrs, Conn.; and James. M. Sligh, Greenville, S.C.; retailer—Margaret A. Clark, Bainbridge Island, Wash.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors operations of the board.

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BLEACH BRIGHTENERS MAY BE KEY TO NEW INSECT CONTROLS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27—Laboratory studies have confirmed for the second time that a laundry bleach brightener can turn a natural virus into a lethal enemy of a major insect pest, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists report.

Martin Shapiro and John J. Hamm, entomologists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, have found a brightener and virus combination that kills the fall armyworm.

Shapiro originally discovered that another brightener could be used to increase the potency of a virus that kills gypsy moth larvae.

On its own, a virus may do little or no damage to a specific insect, "but that can change dramatically when the right brightener is added to it," said Shapiro, who is based at ARS's Beltsville, Md., Insect Biocontrol Laboratory. He discovered the brightener-virus connection and has filed an application for a patent.

Several companies are interested in obtaining licenses to develop new products using this technology, Shapiro said, primarily because insects often develop resistance to chemical insecticides.

That's the case with the fall armyworm, a moth that migrates northward from the South each summer. Its caterpillars eat corn, grasses, vegetables and other crops—causing an estimated \$300 million in damage in the United States each year.

A naturally occurring virus kills some fall armyworms, but not in large enough numbers to stop it from becoming a serious economic pest. A brightener, however, increased the potency of the virus approximately 1,000 times in lab tests, according to Hamm, of ARS's Insect Biology/Management Systems Research unit in Tifton, Ga.

When Hamm added 0.1 percent of the brightener to the virus and fed the compound to three-day-old fall armyworm larvae, 1,000 times less virus was needed to kill 50 percent of the larvae than when the virus was fed to the larvae without the brightener. The name of the specific brightener cannot be disclosed because of the pending patent application.

"If field tests confirm our laboratory findings, the brightener-virus combination would be an excellent biological control agent for controlling the fall armyworm," said Shapiro. "By matching the right brighteners with the right viruses, we may be able to develop a whole new group of biological insecticides for controlling a variety of insect pests."

In his original work, Shapiro discovered a brightener that, when added to a virus called Abby, kills larvae of the gypsy moth, a pest which was accidentally released in Massachusetts in 1869 and infested about seven million acres of trees in 1990, primarily in the northeast. The larvae can defoliate grown trees and kill them within three years, while young trees could die within one year.

Shapiro said it isn't known how brighteners increase the potency of the viruses, but that there are several theories. He said they may help the virus multiply inside the insect, or move the virus through the insect more quickly. In addition, he said, brighteners may block the sunlight from breaking down the viruses.

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WHEAT PRICES REACH FARMER-OWNED RESERVE TRIGGER; STORAGE PAYMENTS TO STOP

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—Since the five-day moving average price of the classes of wheat in the Farmer-Owned Reserve has reached \$3.82 per bushel, storage earnings for wheat producers will be stopped immediately, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official announced today.

John Stevenson, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said the law requires that whenever market prices for such wheat are determined to equal or exceed 95 percent (\$3.80 per bushel) of the wheat target price, storage payments shall cease.

The nonstorage earning period begins today and will continue until prices have been below the storage-stop trigger level for more than 90 consecutive days, Stevenson said.

A moving five-day average price is determined each day for such wheat by adjusting daily weighted average major terminal market prices using a monthly adjustment factor. Program regulations stipulate these five-day averages shall be used for determining when the storage-stop trigger is reached.

Today's announcement will not affect producers' receipt of storage payments earned prior to the announcement. Producers may continue to market reserve wheat at their discretion.

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USDA ANNOUNCES 1992 RICE CROP FINAL ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—The acreage reduction requirement for the 1992 crop of rice will be zero, according to John Stevenson, acting executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation.

A preliminary announcement of the zero reduction was made Jan. 8.

The differential between whole kernel milled rice price support rates is established at \$1.00 per hundredweight, unchanged from the 1991 crop level.

Whole kernel milled rice price support rates are \$10.74 per hundredweight for long grain and \$9.74 for medium and short grain rice. The broken kernel rate for all rice classes is \$5.37 per hundredweight.

Stevenson said beginning Feb. 25, the announcement of the rice world market price will be made at 7 a.m. Eastern time. Previously, the announcement time was 3 p.m. Eastern time. If either Monday or Tuesday is a federal holiday, the announcement will be made at 7 a.m. Eastern time on Wednesday.

The change in announcement time is being made so that only one world price is effective on any day. Prices announced at 7 a.m. will be effective from 12:00:01 a.m. of that day.

Beginning with the 1992 crop of rice, loan deficiency payments and marketing loan gains will be based on national average milling yields by class rather than the milling yields of individual quantities of rice. The calculation of marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments for the 1991 rice crop will not be affected by this change.

Stevenson also said advance deficiency payments equal to 40 percent of the projected total deficiency payments for the 1992-95 crops of rice will be made. The estimated total deficiency payment rate and the advance payment rate for the 1992 crop are \$3.51 and \$1.404 per hundredweight, respectively. This estimated rate is the minimum guaranteed payment level for producers participating in the 50/92 program.

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

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USDA ACCELERATES AVAILABILITY OF 1992 RENTAL HOUSING FUNDS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—More than \$523 million was released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration for loans for rural rental multi-family housing for low and moderate income families.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman said this amount is the balance of the \$573.9 available for these loans in F.Y. 1992. More than \$50 million was obligated in the first quarter of the fiscal year. Ordinarily, a portion of the remaining funds would be released each quarter.

"The immediate release of these funds will help accelerate the availability of rental housing units to help many families in rural America who need a decent and affordable place to live," Veneman said.

"Production of these apartment projects will also provide needed jobs in the homebuilding and construction industries."

Veneman said USDA is speeding release of the funds in response to a directive from President Bush that federal agencies accelerate delivery of program funds that provide job opportunities and assistance to the American people.

FmHA's rural rental housing loans are made to public and nonprofit organizations and individuals who provide and manage apartments in rural areas and communities under 10,000 in population. Under certain circumstances, communities with up to 20,000 residents may be eligible.

Some of the units are reserved for the elderly. Rental assistance may be available to help eligible low-income residents. Dallas R. Sweezy

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